

Dear Chairman King and Members of the Committee:

I respectfully submit this letter regarding *Charge 4: Evaluate the Texas wine industry and the current labeling requirements associated with the use of "Texas" as an appellation. Determine if current regulations and permitting rules are adequate to support the industry's development* for your consideration. As the owner of a small Texas Hill Country winery, I am in full support of HB 4233 (86<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session), the **Texas Wine Truth in Labeling** bill, which provides that in order for a wine to be labeled as a Texas Appellation, 100% of the grapes used to make the wine must be grown in Texas. As you know, under current Texas wine law, wineries are allowed to label their wine as a Texas Appellation with only 75% of the grapes grown in Texas. Given this loophole in the law, many Texas wineries are importing wine from other states and countries, primarily California, and passing it off to consumers as Texas wine. The law is detrimental to the Texas wine industry in many ways, including the following:

- Wine consumers cannot make educated purchases of Texas wine because they cannot discern the true origin of the wine in the bottle.
- Wine consumers are confused and misled by Texas wine labels leading to distrust of the Texas wine industry.
- Texas grape growers are reluctant to plant more grapes to grow the Texas wine industry as they cannot be sure of a sufficient grape market.
- The names of Texas wine regions are misused and, consequently, the integrity of Texas wine regions are diminished.
- Texas wines cannot be judged fairly nationally and internationally as the true origin of Texas wines cannot be determined.
- Wine consumers are denied the right-to-know the true origin of Texas wine, which is arguably the most important aspect of wine – *Terroir* - and what makes each wine unique.

Please fully consider passing Truth in Labeling legislation for the further development of the Texas Wine Industry. I thank you kindly for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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